

September  
2014

Vol. 49 No. 6



Newsletter of **LEPOCO**  
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

## A 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party: Honoring Fran Dreisbach!

There is no better guide to the wonderment of aging with dignity and grace than Fran Dreisbach. In her life's work, Fran has never stopped traveling and questioning and offering compassion and providing a stable presence and being available to small needs and to larger ones. We are fortunate to have this wise elder among us. Fran will be celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Fran has kindly invited us to celebrate the event with her. There will be a party at the Chrysalis, Fran's home, on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 8 pm. There will be food and drinks and birthday cake provided by Fran's family. Please note that this is NOT a potluck.

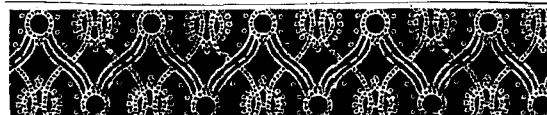
Fran is hoping many friends, families, Lehigh Valley Monthly Meeting folks and LEPOCO members will join her for the celebration. Fran's request is: "no gifts please." Those who wish to honor her nine decades are asked to make a donation to LEPOCO in some amount that includes the number 9 -- that is \$0.90, \$9.00, \$19.00, \$29.00, etc. Fran was one of the founding members of LEPOCO. The peace group has been active for almost 50 years in the Lehigh Valley and Fran has been intimately involved in its commitment to bringing public awareness to an endless variety of peace and justice issues. Honoring her with a contribution to LEPOCO will bring her much joy and let her know how grateful we are for her years of dedication. Checks can be made out to LEPOCO with Fran's name on the memo section.

Mark your calendar and come to the party. If you are able to attend please notify Fran's daughter, Christine Murray at [cdmurray@entermail.net](mailto:cdmurray@entermail.net) or at 610-691-1359 if possible. If you're not able to make the advance call please attend anyway, there will be plenty for everyone.

- Mimi Lang

Directions to the Chrysalis, 75 Tumble Creek Road, Easton (18042). For those without a GPS: take Pembroke Rd. going east out of Bethlehem, bear right at the light at a big curve onto Washington St. toward Freemansburg (Pembroke Rd./which later becomes Freemansburg Ave. makes a big turn to the left at this light, Washington, St. goes almost straight, but do not take the sharp right onto Cambria St.); follow Washington St. to Main Street in Freemansburg; turn right; go to the end of town and follow the road over the Lehigh River Bridge; turn right at the end of the bridge

onto Shimersville Rd.; get in the left lane and go a short distance and turn left onto Applebutter Rd. (before the sewage treatment plant); go 3 miles to STOP sign (you will pass a sheep/goat farm, a gas power plant, a mountain of landfill, go up and down hills and around curves); at the STOP sign turn left onto Lower Saucon Road (this later becomes Island Park Rd.); turn right at the second road, Tumble Creek Rd.; go about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to black mailbox on right, # 75; park anywhere in the lovely space. Call LEPOCO if you need non-GPS directions from someplace other than Bethlehem.



Your support is sought for a

### Community Shopping Event

benefitting the

LEPOCO Peace Center

at

### Ten Thousand Villages

(A Fair Trade Retailer)

Lehigh Valley Mall

Outdoor Shops, Suite 904 (across from Apple)  
Whitehall, PA (18052)

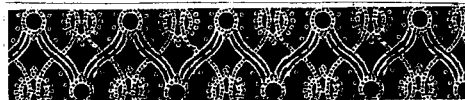
**Sunday, September 14, 2014**

**1-5 pm**

Ten Thousand Villages is an excellent source for unique handmade gifts, jewelry, home décor, art and sculpture, textiles, serveware and personal accessories representing the diverse cultures of artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. As a fair trade retailer, product sales help pay for food, education, healthcare, and housing for artisans who might otherwise live on less than \$2 a day.

During this Community Shopping Event 15% of each sale will be donated to assist the efforts of LEPOCO Peace Center.

This is a great opportunity to learn about this wonderful fair trade retailer located right here in the Lehigh Valley while you also support LEPOCO's work. We are grateful to Ten Thousand Villages, Lehigh Valley, for so generously sharing their work with local community groups.



## Locals Attend Climate Lobby

Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) members Martha Christine (also a member of LEPOCO's Steering Committee) and Kim Shaffer spent three days in Washington, DC, this summer lobbying members of congress about the immediate need to address climate change. They joined with more than 600 other members of the national organization and met with staff in the offices of over 500 members of congress to propose content and language for legislation to implement a carbon fee and dividend.

The fee and dividend proposal would impose a fee on carbon-emitting fuels at the source or at the border. All funds collected would be returned to United States citizens. This would be in the form of a monthly check that would off-set the price of rising energy costs. This proposal reportedly appeals to Republicans and Tea Partiers because it doesn't grow the government. It also appeals to Democrats because people who use more energy (the wealthy) will receive the exact same dividend as those who use less energy (the working and middle class).

Our local CCL chapter has met with Representative Cartwright, who is convinced the carbon fee and dividend proposal would be great legislation. We've also met with Representative Dent who listened carefully and asked thoughtful, informed questions.

CCL is committed to finding a solution to climate change that works for everyone. Therefore they work hard to address the concerns of all political parties. Through the process of listening to concerns expressed by congresspeople they commissioned an economic study to show the economic impact of the carbon fee and dividend. They found that by implementing the carbon fee and dividend over the next 20 years the economy would actually be in better shape than if we took no action on climate change. Almost 3 million jobs would be created, emissions would be reduced by 50% of 1990 levels, and we'd have the added benefit of saving 13,000 lives each year.

If you'd like more information or would like to become involved with the local CCL Chapter, please contact Martha Christine, at 610-861-8983, or come to one of our monthly meetings, held on the Tuesday after the first Saturday of the month. We share a potluck at 6 pm as part of the meeting at the NCC Southside Fowler Center. More information about CCL can be found at their website: [citizensclimatechange.org](http://citizensclimatechange.org).

- Martha Christine

## NYC: September 21. Be There. Why?

In the June 5<sup>th</sup> issue of "Rolling Stone" Bill McKibben of 350.org wrote:

"My guess is people will come by the tens of thousands, and it will be the largest demonstration yet of human resolve in the face of climate change. Sure, some of it will be exciting -- who doesn't like the chance to

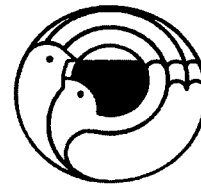
march and sing and carry a clever sign through the canyons of Manhattan? But this is dead-serious business...

"In a rational world, no one would need to march. In a rational world, policymakers would have heeded scientists when they first sounded the alarm 25 years ago. But in this world, reason, having won the argument, has so far lost the fight. The fossil-fuel industry, by virtue of being perhaps the richest enterprise in human history, has been able to delay effective action, almost to the point where it's too late...

"The pieces are in place for real, swift, sudden change...: If Germany on a sunny day can generate half its power from solar panels, and Texas makes a third of its electricity from wind, then you know technology isn't an impossible obstacle anymore. The pieces are in place, but the pieces won't move themselves. That's where movements come in... They can build up pressure on the system, enough, with luck, to blow out those bags of money that are blocking progress... The moment to salvage something of the Holocene is passing fast..."

If you are going to New York on your own on September 21<sup>st</sup>: The march will begin at 11:30 am, at Columbus Circle. See to [www.peoplesclimate.org](http://www.peoplesclimate.org) for more info.

If you want to take a bus with other marchers on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>, contact Berks Gas Truth ([www.gastruth.org](http://www.gastruth.org)). They are sponsoring a bus(es) that will stop in Trexlertown, at Rt. 33 Park & Ride and at Phillipsburg Mall. Seats are \$15 each.



### Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern  
313 West Fourth Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
phone: 610-691-8730  
fax: 610-691-8904  
website: [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org)  
e-mail: [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net)

The *LEPOCO Newsletter* is published eight times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

#### Annual dues are:

Regular Member .....	\$35
Limited Income Member .....	\$ 5
Household Membership .....	\$45
Supporting Member .....	\$75

Articles/news should be submitted to the address above for consideration for the next issue of the newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: robert Daniels II, Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli.

Thanks to all the people who collate and prepare the newsletter for mailing each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Terry Briscoe, Bridger Buller, Martha Christine, robert Daniels II (ex-officio), Janet Goloub, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Monica McAgnon, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio).

# Potluck / Popcorn & Politics

Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm

Michael Zoughbi

*"A Palestinian Christian Reports from Bethlehem in Palestine"*

Potluck & Politics sponsored by the LEPOCO Peace Center  
at Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting  
4116 Bath Pike, Hanover Township (north of Bethlehem)  
on Rt. 512 ½ mile north of Rt. 22

Michael Zoughbi runs a bakery and a business of selling olivewood carvings made in Palestine. He has many ties with the United States -- his son studies at a seminary in Minnesota, another son runs a tourism business, he sells the olivewood carvings in the U.S., and our Vince Stravino visited his home on one of Vince's trips to Israel/Palestine. When Michael Zoughbi visits the U.S. he works to educate us (the U.S. public) on the reality of living in occupied Palestine. We hope you can attend this informal, enlightening program.

*Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6:30 pm.  
The presentation and discussion should begin shortly after 7:00 pm.*

Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 pm

*"Where Should the Birds Fly?"*

A Popcorn & Politics Film projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

In December of 2008 Israel launched a devastating attack on Gaza. A month of bullets, bombs, rockets, white phosphorus, tanks and bulldozers left 1400, mostly civilians, dead and this section of Occupied Palestine in rubble. "Where Should the Birds Fly," is a compelling and moving Palestinian film based on the story of two remarkable young women, who personify the struggle to maintain humanity, humor, hope, and to find some degree of normality in the brutal abnormality that has been imposed on them and all Palestinians.

Directed by Fida Qishta (who also appears in the film). 64 minutes. 2013.

Fida Qishta, the director,

will join us to introduce the movie and participate in the discussion following the screening.

*Please bring a snack or beverage to share.*



## Book Group

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet next on October 14<sup>th</sup> (this is not a first Tuesday, but it is the preferred date for the group in October). The book for discussion will be, *House of War: The Pentagon & the Disastrous Rise of American Power*, by James Carroll. This book is a sweeping yet intimate look at the Pentagon and its vast - often hidden - impact on our country. In *House of War*, Carroll shows how the forces that attacked the Pentagon on 9/11 were set in motion exactly sixty years earlier, on September 11, 1941, when ground was broken for the Pentagon. Please join the Book Club for this important discussion. (The discussion of this book had been originally scheduled for September, but was moved to October because the book is a rather lengthy read and because some regular book group members had unexpected travel plans.)

The group meets at the Bethlehem Wegman's (off Rt. 512, north of Rt. 22). The meeting starts at 6 pm. You can get some food and/or drink and join the group in the upstairs dining area. For more info. contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407.

## LEPOCO Garage Sale:

Saturday, October 4, 8 am - 1 pm

1526 Oakland St., Bethlehem (18018)

(from Easton Ave., east on Washington Ave., south on Oakland)

### You Can Help:

- 1) Drop off donations for Garage Sale at address above on Thursday, October 2, 4 to 7 pm. No clothing (limited space). Other treasures, in useable condition & priced (if possible). Call 610-866-2407 to make other drop-off arrangements.
- 2) Help with Garage Sale set-up on Friday, October 3, noon to 6 pm, at address above. Please call LEPOCO (610-691-8730) to schedule your two-hour time slot.
- 3) Help staff the Garage Sale, Saturday, October 4, 7 am to 2 pm. Again, please call LEPOCO (610-691-8730) to schedule a two-hour (or more) time slot.
- 4) Visit the sale and shop on Saturday, October 4, 8 am to 1 pm.

# Hearing from a LEPOCO Elder

The celebration for LEPOCO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary began early with a simple afternoon gathering on July 9<sup>th</sup> to honor one of the founders of LEPOCO, Peter Cohen. Peter, a frail but enthusiastic elder, has recently returned from California to live with his son, Dan, in Snyder'sville. Several of the other founding members present acknowledged that it was Peter who provided the real spark and persistence to birth the new group. Friends from the Lehigh Valley and the Poconos met at the Kirkridge Retreat Center in Bangor in 1965, as the Vietnam War raged, to take action to make their voices heard for peace and nonviolence. That meeting resulted in the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, LEPOCO.

Since the 60s, Peter has continued his work to increase awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons, war and corrupt capitalism. He interrupted his love of painting because of his intense involvement in political issues. When he moved to Santa Barbara, California, he returned to painting in an effort to draw about the two great threats to democracy and life, nuclear weapons and the burning of fossil fuels. He also contributed an article a week to various newsletters and internet sites. Peter paints and writes and speaks about the difficulties faced by world citizens who have to deal with the results of our ineptitude and lack of leadership in establishing true democracy and a peaceful coexistence on the planet.

Peter spoke about the dependency of all places in the U.S. on the building of nuclear weapons. Each small city or town has an industry that in some way contributes to some part of the weapons system. The only way we will give up nuclear weapons is if we are forced to do so by the international community. The good news is that "there is a force at work in the world" that will make change happen. For instance, a company in China will build a better airplane and put Boeing out of business.

Peter closed with the advice that discouragement leads to nothing, but discouragement, pessimism leads to nothing but pessimism. Be hopeful. LEPOCO is one of the necessary messengers or prophets needed to enlighten people. Follow the advice of Congressman John Lewis to, "Make good trouble." We have to carry on because it is the right thing to do.

We were grateful for Peter's time with us and wish him well as he is embraced as the gracious elder that he is by his loving family and by the peace community that he helped to establish.

- Mimi Lang

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As this newsletter was being prepared we received word that Peter Cohen died on Sunday afternoon, September 7. We are very sad to get this news, but all the more glad that we were able to spend time with him in early

July as Mimi describes above. You can read one of his last pieces, "The Suicide Path," by Peter G. Cohen, May 21, 2014, at [www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org). One highlighted quote: "The pathological indifference of corporations and some wealthy individuals to the long-range effects of their actions makes it obvious that we urgently need a plan to transform them into good citizens."

Plans for a memorial service for Peter Cohen, to be held later this fall, are yet to be announced.

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## Condemnation of United States Intervention in Iraq

Earlier this summer, as a Sunni jihadist group began to have success in their insurgency in Iraq, the United States began to deploy military forces to Iraq. Since then, our military forces have done more than simply advise the Iraqi government -- something that had been implied at the time to be our purpose there. In early August, U.S. military forces began what the president and the media have called "targeted airstrikes" in the northern portion of Iraq against radical Islamists.

That Sunni jihadist group, which has been known as both the "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" and the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant," is now known simply as the Islamic State. Though the actions of such a group of violent religious zealots must be condemned, the United States must not become entrenched in another military quagmire. Too many innocent civilians have been killed by the United States' involvement in both previous wars in Iraq. No matter how targeted the airstrikes are, those who have and want nothing to do with the establishment of an extremist Islamic state will be affected. Families will be torn apart and innocents killed, yes, but sentiment against the United States will grow as well. Just as both the first and second U.S.-led wars in Iraq led to an exponential rise in anti-U.S. sentiment, so will the military actions of 2014 and beyond.

We cannot let the U.S. become ensnared in another violent endless quagmire in the Middle East. Barack Obama himself, while addressing reporters' questions about U.S. involvement in this conflict, stated that, "We don't have a plan yet." This was just before the start of the Labor Day weekend. Hopefully, this apparent sign of forethought will allow for those opposed to more U.S. military involvement in Iraq to have a say. Nevertheless, that forethought will not excuse the spilling of more blood to protect U.S. "interests." This military involvement should be stopped before it escalates.

- Bridger Buller



# Peace Camp 2014



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1) Roberta Meek (at right) leads music at an all-camper gathering.  
2) Campers and helpers in the Green Group enjoy sharing.  
3) The Rose Group hams it up for camp photographer Susie Ravitz.  
4) Blue Group campers participate in outdoor games.



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5) Campers in the Yellow Group learn how to fold origami peace cranes.  
6) Naoko Cauller and Jen Harayda prepare delicious, healthy snacks.  
7) The youngest campers, the Purple Group learn cooperation in a fun group activity.



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Photos  
by  
Susie  
Ravitz.

# A Few Reports from Peace Camp

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The Young People Making Peace summer day camp was held July 21-25, this year at First Presbyterian Church in Allentown. Some pictures from the camp are on the previous page. We had 43 peace campers this year and over 40 volunteer staff from teen leaders to adult helpers (and vice versa) and energetic resource people. The short pieces below report on some of the experiences of Peace Camp. Thank you to all the Volunteers and campers who worked so hard to make Peace Camp a meaningful experience, and to First Presbyterian Church for welcoming Peace Camp to their fine building.

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This year, I enjoyed being in the blue group. I had fun making new friends and trying new activities. I loved making shirts with any peaceful design. It was a fun way to express how I felt about that week. Water games were nice to play after we got hot and sweaty. I liked the morning activities this time better than before. Everyday we read a peace poem in the morning and during the day. My group and I enjoyed that. I am glad that I came back to peace camp and will be sure to come back next year.

- Charlotte Harayda, Camper, Blue Group

Throughout the year, I find it very difficult to find moments of peace in my life and in the world around me. For five days every July, however, I know that I will be able to find what I am looking for. As a child Peace Camper, I found serenity through learning about nature, playing games, reading stories, singing songs, and making crafts with LEPOCO leaders. Now I still find peace as a leader myself, with my own group of young campers. I find myself still learning about the idea of peace, even as an instructor.

This year I co-led the yellow group, one of the youngest groups of children at peace camp. To them, peace isn't necessarily about stopping wars between nations, but it is about simple conflict resolution and treating nature with respect. One day this year, we read the book, *The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss. This activity might seem like a silly way to teach young people about such a complicated topic as peace, but in the end, it was very simple. The Sneetches fought over their differences, much like the way that young children fight over theirs. In the simplest of ways, this conflict resolution is what peace is, and by talking about stopping wars in terms of star-bellied or not, the kids learned one of the first steps towards peace: acceptance.

I am so thankful for the opportunity to spread peace to these kids year after year, and for having created such wonderful friendships with my co-leaders. LEPOCO Peace Camp is a place like no other, and I am so grateful to be a part of it.

- Linnea Harris, Teen Leader, Yellow Group

What does peace camp mean to me? Diverse groups come together, young people and adults to create an unforgettable experience. In the Rose Group we explored the nature of wolves and their relationship to us in a reading by co-leader Franscheska Rosa. We were fortunate to have the music of Roberta Meek who not only led inspiring peace and justice songs for all the groups, but also methodically incorporated important lessons about the civil rights movement and current events, including some discussion of immigration issues that everyone could understand. Dan Miller, our other co-leader, facilitated many discussions and led important activities at peace camp (including talk about and display of his bees).

Donna Hartmann opened the camp day with stories, poems and puppet shows, that kept the children's attention focused while breaking down barriers and stereotypes, all along modeling peaceful ways of being in harmony with each other. She was creative and funny, never missing an opportunity to engage everyone.

True to summer camp, juggling the balance between higher learning and pure fun was the effort of Margot Hillman and Max Cole with outdoor games. The recreational activities they led were well-planned, imaginative, and a must-do for our energetic campers who learn a lot through play and free time.

Peace Camp for me has been transformational. I learned a lot, and as an humanist, observed the whole camp growing together.

- Lori Wollod, Adult Helper, Rose Group

The world is a puzzle and sometimes it seems  
The pieces just won't fit the frame.  
But by working together, with patience and trust,  
And learning some skills you know that's a must  
We can find a solution to war and pollution  
And then we'll accomplish our aim  
Of making a world of beauty and joy,  
Where justice and peace are the key.  
It all works together, the pieces all fit  
When the picture includes you and me!

- One of five poems shared at Peace Camp  
openings by Donna Hartmann, co-convenor, Peace  
Camp 2014

Check out the LEPOCO website at [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org)  
for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive,  
Videos, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail updates or  
to receive your copy of the newsletter by e-mail,  
by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to  
[lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net).

# The Struggle Shared

*"There may be times when we are powerless  
to prevent injustice,  
but there must never be a time  
when we fail to protest."*

- Elie Wiesel

**HEART OF JUSTICE** - The Justice & Advocacy Program of the Lehigh Conference of Churches is hosting another "The Heart of Justice" conference, on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, at St John's United Church of Christ, Allentown. The focus of this year's conference will be on ways we can begin to re-make our criminal justice system to provide healing, hope, restoration, and reconciliation to both offenders and victims of crime.

The United States has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's prisoners. Clearly our "War on Drugs," "War on Crime," "Zero Tolerance" policies have done little to reduce crime, but have resulted in mass incarceration, inflated spending on jails and law enforcement, and marginalization of the poor, people of color, and people with mental illness.

While many states have begun to reduce prison populations and address the injustices of the prison-industrial complex, Pennsylvania continues to build new prisons and cut funding for schools. DecarceratePA participated in last year's conference and a local Decarcerate group has met regularly over the past year.

The plenary speakers for the Heart of Justice Conference will be Neftali Olmeda, Senior Pastor of the Third Day Worship Center in Allentown, and Andrea James, who as an attorney represented poor families until she was disbarred in 2009, and sentenced to 24 months in federal prison herself.

Workshop topics will include Jail/Prison Visitation 101, Teaching Nonviolent Conflict Resolution, and the School to Prison Pipeline.

For more information go to [www.justice.ppj.org](http://www.justice.ppj.org) or call the LCC office at 610-433-6421.

**PEACE SINGERS TO HELP WITH SOUP KITCHEN BENEFIT** - On Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, at 2 pm, the LEPOCO Peace Singers will participate in a concert to benefit the Trinity Soup Kitchen, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 44 East Market Street, Bethlehem.

Trinity has hosted this Soup Kitchen, which currently serves 175 people each weekday, for the past 32 years. In addition to the daily meals, Trinity's program employs a social worker to assess and help visitors to the Kitchen with other needs. In 2008, the staff saw an increasing need for emergency shelter for the many homeless people who were visiting the soup kitchen, and initiated a program to answer the need. Other churches and volunteers became involved, providing shelter space on a rotating basis. A separate committee evolved, which now continues to provide shelter.

The Soup Kitchen has always depended on funding from grants, contributions from individuals and organizations, and donations and purchases from Second Harvest Food Bank, restaurant supply companies and grocery stores. Funding sources have shrunk in recent years, and Trinity has had to resort to more creative fundraising to keep the Soup Kitchen's larders full. The concert on the 21<sup>st</sup> is the sixth such event organized to support the soup kitchen.

Marcie Lightwood is the social worker for the Trinity Soup Kitchen and is also a member of the Peace Singers. The Singers have been rehearsing a short list of favorites from its our repertoire to prepare for the concert. Also performing on September 21<sup>st</sup> will be the cover band, "Closer" and there will be a pre-concert brunch from 12:30 to 1:45 pm. Tickets are \$10 for either the brunch or the concert alone, or \$15 for both.

For more information about this event or about volunteering or otherwise supporting the soup kitchen, call the church at 610-867-4741. Tickets for the concert and brunch are also available at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 610-691-8730. Please, come out and support the Soup Kitchen and the Peace Singers on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**LABOR DAY MARCH** - In the present economy, with daily attacks on workers fighting for a living wage from Walmart and the fast food industry, challenges to social security, cut-backs in human services, even while war and prison-industry money increases, it is more important than ever for those of us who advocate for justice to stand in solidarity with organized labor.

By the time you read this, one of LEPOCO's favorite opportunities to do this will have passed, and perhaps many readers will enjoy this article as a reminiscence. If you weren't there, what you missed was the annual Labor Day Parade organized by the United Steelworkers Local 2599, on Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, in downtown Bethlehem. As I write this, the event hasn't happened yet, so I can't report on what happened this year. I can say that the 2013 parade was spectacular, including a marching band from Moravian College, and over a hundred union members organized with colorful T-shirts designating their contingents, winding from the Spring Street parking lot under the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, up Main Street to Broad, down New, past Wall Street, and down Church, returning to the Spring Street lot. Last year the LEPOCO delegation walked behind a contingent of Teamsters on Harleys with black leather jackets emblazoned with their union logo.

If this fun parade was not on your calendar, and you don't want to miss it next year, be sure to let LEPOCO know so you can be included in the list for advance notice about events. For more information about local union organizing, contact the United Steelworkers at 610-867-3772.

- Jeff Vitelli

## Responses to the Slaughter in Gaza, Summer 2014

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I. Following the 1967 war in Israel the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* printed the following statement: "Our right to defend ourselves from annihilation does not give us the right to oppress others. Foreign occupation results in foreign rule, foreign rule results in resistance, resistance results in suppression, suppression results in terrorism and counter-terrorism. Victims of terrorism are usually innocents. Holding on to the Territories will turn us into a nation of murderers and murder victims. Let us get out of the Occupied Territories now!" - September 29, 1967

In my opinion these are very wise words that tragically were not heeded. Since 1967 things have only gotten worse. Playing the blame game is pointless and totally nonproductive. So is the slaughter going on right now. It is unbelievably heartbreaking to see both Hamas and the Israeli government deny the humanity and the right to life of the other. As U.S. citizens we all bear enormous responsibility for this apparently unending human tragedy. - Susie Ravitz

II. In early August national and local religious peace groups joined the six Nobel Peace Laureates and thousands of others in endorsing the Palestinian call for an arms embargo on Israel -- supporting efforts to prevent the distribution of weapons to Gaza and a blockade of weapons to Israel.

III. Also, in early August CODEPINK pointed to the \$62 million worth of munitions sent to Israel by the United States from January to May of 2014 (including \$27 million for rocket launchers, \$9.3 million for parts of guided missiles, \$762,000 for bombs, grenades and munitions of war) and called for the U.S. government to end all arms shipments to Israel.

IV. Local peace activists gathered at least three times in late July and early August with signs like "Israel can't bomb its way to peace: ceasefire and negotiate." People protested the atrocities of the war outside the Jewish Community Center in Allentown on the occasion of an Israeli official speaking about Israel's actions; on Al Quds Day (July 25<sup>th</sup>) in downtown Allentown; and as Musikfest opened in Bethlehem on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

V. A good source for analysis of the Israel-Palestine conflict looking toward peace is Jewish Voice for Peace. See [www.JVP.org](http://www.JVP.org)

## Saying No to the NATO Summit

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As world leaders gathered in Wales on September 4<sup>th</sup> for the NATO Summit, protestors also gathered from No to NATO actions, Counter Summits, demonstrations and a Long No to NATO March. The protestors delivered a message to NATO leaders that included the words of Dr. John Cox of CND (Campaign for Nuclear Dis-

armament): "The recent scale of NATO expansion has not made the world a more secure place but instead has contributed to international tension as Russia sees itself increasingly surrounded by U.S. and NATO bases including in the Balkans, the Middle East and central Asia... The environmental dangers we all face, together with world poverty and child mortality will never be solved by nuclear military alliance. Arms companies benefit from war and war preparations, while for ordinary people -- often the most vulnerable, war only makes things worse... Public money should be spent on health, education, social services and planning a safe future for our grandchildren -- not more arms for NATO."

## A Huge Tragedy

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At least 191,369 people have been killed in Syria's conflict through April 2014, more than double the figure documented a year ago and probably still an underestimate, according to the United Nations human rights office in late August.

Mennonite Central Committee reported this summer that more than 9 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, and that neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey are bearing the tremendous burden of hosting Syrian refugees, now numbering at least 2.6 million.

U.S. officials have stated regularly that "there is no military solution to this conflict," but the U.S. has provided military support to the opposition, hoping they will thereby have a stronger negotiating position against President Assad. As this newsletter is being prepared we are just learning of new U.S. military efforts in Iraq/Syria to "combat" the Islamic State faction that is fighting in both countries.

Archbishop Jean Kawak of the Syrian Orthodox Church has said, "We can't reach peace through violence. We have no other option but dialogue."

(Washington Memo, Mennonite Central Committee, Vol. XLVI, No. 2.)

## The Tragedy of Children Fleeing Violence

According to Think Progress the share prices for two of the largest private prison firms have spiked sharply since an influx of unaccompanied migrant children crossing the border was reported this summer. And some investors in GEO Group and Corrections Corporation of America are seizing on the opportunity for more profit from incarceration, based on recent comments to CNN Money. (9/2/14)

On July 31<sup>st</sup> over 100 faith leaders were arrested at a peaceful protest in Washington, DC, calling for an end to excessive deportations and for ample resources to care for children at the border.

In late August WAMU radio (Washington, DC) interviewed Dr. Hector Hernandez, the man in charge of the San Pedro Sula morgue in Honduras. Dr. Hernandez said that at least five youths recently deported from the U.S. to Honduras had been murdered in his city in the previous week. Their ages ranged from 12 to 18.



# Bits & Pieces

☪ **The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Fair** at Buckingham Friends Meeting & School in Lahaska, PA, will take place Sat., Sept. 20, 10:30 am to 4 pm. (The Meetinghouse is at 5684 York Road, Routes 202 & 263 almost next door to Peddler's Village.) It is a quiet gathering with activities for all ages, music, food, and lots of information about peace and justice efforts, all promoting harmony in the home, community, environment and the world. LEPOCO will have an information table/booth. If you can help with staffing please call the office at 610-691-8730.

☪ As this newsletter was in preparation **Robert Daniels II, LEPOCO staffperson since 2008**, announced that he will be leaving his position at LEPOCO in early October. His active work at LEPOCO will be very much missed. There will be a more adequate appreciation in a later newsletter and the Steering Committee will soon announce an event to honor Robert's work as well as their efforts to seek new staff.

☪ LEPOCO's Steering Committee needs your help. We would like to form a **"Stop the Wars" Committee** to more adequately address the wars that persist with U.S. involvement. We would also like to form a **LEPOCO 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee** to plan appropriate activities to further local peace work as we mark this anniversary. If you can help with either/both of these projects please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

☪ Thank you to all those who participated in the peace contingent at the **Labor Day Parade** on Sunday, Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, in Bethlehem. The Parade is organized by the United Steelworkers of America Local 2599, Bethlehem. Both Peter Crownfield ("Money from Pentagon to Communities") and Susie Ravitz ("Jobs Not War: Raise the Minimum Wage") got pictures with their signs in local media, *The Morning Call* and *lehighvalleylive.com*, respectively. Others who marched were John

Zachmann, Tom Stinnett, Monica McAgnon, Jeff Vitelli, Gloria McVeigh, and Nancy Tate.

☪ **Thank you** to the following people who helped at fairs and festivals in August (Pride in the Park Festival on Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>; VegFest on Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>; the Community/Club Expo at Lehigh University on Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>; and, the Community Partners Fair at Northampton Community College on Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>): Dan Miller, Kathryn Hoffman, Susie Ravitz, Renate Brosky, Amanda Zaniesienko, Mimi Lang, Rita Corriel, Tom Stinnett, Robert Daniels II, Monica McAgnon, Diane Dilendik, John Zachmann, Martha Christine, Gloria McVeigh, Nancy Tate, Dalton Young, and Bridger Buller.

☪ **A Concerned Citizens Against the Pipeline** group has formed to oppose the PennEast pipeline project of UGI Energy and its partners. The proposed project would run from Wilkes-Barre to Trenton and cut through some of the most beautiful areas in this region. LEPOCO has a flyer from the group and they have a page on Facebook.

☪ In June more than **1300 prisoners at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Coal Township** (near Shamokin, Pennsylvania) staged a week-long boy-

cott of the dining hall to protest cuts to their food portions. Their peaceful protest was renewed in August. They have issued a list of 22 demands for improved living conditions. You can learn more and sign a petition to support these men at [www.decarceratepa.org](http://www.decarceratepa.org).

☪ People across the U.S. responded with **grief and anger after the murder of Michael Brown** by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9. Locally a small group of clergy gathered at a prayer vigil in Easton, the Lehigh Valley Chapter of Decarcerate-PA marched in Allentown with signs like "You Don't Need Tanks & Assault Rifles Against Unarmed Civilians," and Shiloh Baptist Church in Easton held a forum on August 27<sup>th</sup> for a discussion of being young, black and male in the U.S.

☪ Gwendolyn Evans is painting all **162 birds that rely on the wetlands** at the Green Pond Country Club in Bethlehem Township as a statement that those wetlands should be preserved. She and many others have attended meetings of the Township Commissioners to share their opposition to the proposed 265 home development on the land. The Audubon Society has declared the land an "Important Bird Area."

## MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...ETC.

**Thursdays, September 11 & October 9, 6 pm: Lehigh Valley Chapter of Veterans for Peace** meeting at Wegman's, Bethlehem.

**Monday, September 15, 7 pm: LEPOCO Peace Singers** rehearsal, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 44 #. Market St., Bethlehem.

**Tuesday, September 16, 12:30 pm: Americas Solidarity Group** meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

**Wednesday, September 17, 11:30 am: Nuclear Abolition Sisters** meeting at Anatolian Kitchen, 3016 Linden St., Bethlehem.

**Thursday, September 18, 11 am: Newsletter Planning Meeting** at LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

**Mondays, October 13 & November 10, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting** at the Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed and set.

**Tuesday, October 14, 3 pm: L.V. Committee Against State Killing** meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center. Bring lunch if you like.

**Monday, October 27, 7 pm: Peace Camp Planning Committee** meeting to begin planning for 2015.

*Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.*

*For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings, please see [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).*



# LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

313 W. Fourth St., Bethlehem, PA 18015  
610-691-8730 [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net)  
Fax: 610-691-8904 [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org)

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Handwritten marks: four L-shaped symbols arranged in a square pattern.

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P & P

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Struggle Shared

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Crises, Crises...

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Bits & Pieces



## Monthly Peace Vigil

4:30 - 5:30 pm; Second Thursdays

### October 9

*Our wars continue and expand.  
Please help witness for peace.*

3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 /  
Tom Ulrich 610-882-1136

Potluck & Politics

Thurs., Sept. 18, 6:30 pm

L.V. Friends Meetinghouse

Michael Zoghbi

*A Palestinian Christian Reports  
from Bethlehem in Palestine*

(see page 3)

### October 4

## LEPOCO Garage Sale

(see Page 3)

## Sunday, September 14

1-5 pm: Visit 10,000 Villages

4-8 pm: Celebrate Fran Dreisbach's 90<sup>th</sup>

(See page 1 for details on both.)

### Sunday

Sept. 21

2 pm

LOVE

Peace

Brunch

Closer

&

LEPOCO

Peace

Singers

(see page 7)

### Sunday, September 21

March in NYC to Save the Planet

(see page 2 for more info.)

## Stand Up & Speak Out!

### Saturdays, September 27

### & October 25

### 12 Noon

Protest Horsham Drone Command Center

(Outside Horsham Air National Guard Station,  
Easton & County Line Roads, Horsham, PA)

10:45 am: Carpool from Lehigh Valley

(From Hellertown Park & Ride, Silvēx Rd.  
near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78, behind Wendy's)

Call 610-691-8730.